

I had just one record for February (a male on 15.ii.1998). The range of dates I hold is shown in *Table 1* below.

**Table 1.** Recorded dates of observations of *Anthophora plumipes* (Pallas) in Surrey

February			March			April				May			June			
8-14	15-21	22-28	1-7	8-14	15-21	22-28	29-4	5-11	12-18	19-25	26-2	3-9	10-16	17-23	24-30	31-6
1	2			2	5	5	4	3	1	6	1	5		1		1

With the growing awareness of early emergence of insects, this strikes me as one which might be investigated in more detail. For example, do they emerge earlier in central London than in the suburbs or in more rural areas? I would be interested to hear from anyone who has records of this species over a period of years, or who would be interested in establishing a monitoring scheme to use this species to investigate the impact of urbanisation on insect emergence.— ROGER K. A. MORRIS, c/o 241 Commonsides East, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 1HB.

***Psilota anthracina* Mg. (Dip.: Syrphidae) and *Melanochaeta capreolus* (Haliday) (Dip.: Chloropidae) – two enigmatic species found together at a site in East Kent**

On 24 May 2000, the opportunity to record flies was taken whilst accompanying some sixth form students to Denge Wood near Garlinge Green, East Kent (grid reference TR 106528). The site visited is managed by the Woodland Trust and consists of a small area of west-facing chalk grassland fringed by beech *Fagus sylvatica* and hazel *Corylus avellana* woodland. Management seems concerned largely with maintaining populations of certain orchids, e.g., Lady orchid *Orchis purpurea* and the Duke of Burgundy Fritillary *Hamearis lucina* L., although previous visits by myself have also revealed a good diversity of less common insects, such as *Microrhagus pygmaeus* (Fabr.) (Col.: Eucnemidae), *Nymphalis antiopa* L. (Lep.: Nymphalidae) and *Macronychia polyodon* (Mg.) (Dip.: Sarcophagidae) on 1.vi.1998, 16.iv.1996 and 16.vii.1996 respectively.

Between 12.00 and 12.30 hours, sweeping was confined to a small area of recent coppice work around a mature beech in the lowermost part of the reserve, within which someone had built a “camp” of birch *Betula pendula* logs. On returning home, the contents of the pooter were quickly sorted and pinned and the resultant material scanned for unfamiliar forms. The first specimen to deserve closer attention was a deep blue-black fly which, at the time of collection, was taken to be *Hydrotaea ignava* (Harris), being about the same size and equally sluggish in nature. It was only on examining the wing venation that the fly was seen to be a syrphid and subsequent reference to Stubbs and Falk (1983. *British Hoverflies*. British Entomological and Natural History Society), revealed it to be a male *Psilota anthracina* Mg.. Falk (1991. *A review of the scarce and threatened flies of Great Britain (part 1)*). Research

and survey in nature conservation 39), states that the species has its stronghold in the New Forest and Windsor and referred to other sites in Dorset, Essex, Surrey and Warwickshire. Chandler, 1969 (The Hover-flies of Kent. *Transactions of the Kent Field Club* 3:139-202) considered that *P. anthracina* was a species unlikely to be found in Kent. The larvae are now known to develop in sap runs on trees (Stubbs, 1996. *British Hoverflies*, second supplement. British Entomological and Natural History Society).

Numerous specimens of *Oscinella* were also swept during the visit, including several *O. maura* (Fall.) which is conspicuous because of its white arista. A single female with darkened wings was at first thought to a teratological form of the latter as here the arista was much thickened (considerably more so than in the genus *Elachiptera*) and covered with dark pubescence. Using the key by Collin (1946. The British genera and species of Oscinellinae (Diptera, Chloropidae). *Transactions of the Royal Entomological Society of London* 97: 117-148), the specimen readily ran to *Melanochaeta capreolus* (Haliday). Collin stated "...except for its arista, might easily pass as a species of *Oscinella*" and he had personally taken the species in three different localities in Cambridgeshire in May and June. Dr J. Ismay (pers. comm.) has additional records from Berkshire, Herefordshire, Lancashire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey and Yorkshire.

The discovery of these two individuals raises the number of Syrphidae recorded from the county to 194 species and Chloropidae to 123.—LAURENCE CLEMONS, 14 St. John's Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 4NE.

### **Another record of the bee-wolf, *Philanthus triangulum* (Fabr.) (Hym.: Sphecidae) in urban central London**

On 5 August 1999, I netted an unusual-looking wasp from a narrow and undistinguished scrubby stretch of trees, mainly ornamentals, lining the railway trackside at Parson's Green, London (grid reference TQ 249766). It proved to be the bee-wolf *Philanthus triangulum*. Although listed as "Vulnerable" (RDB2) by Else & Spooner (1987. *Philanthus triangulum*, the bee wolf. In: Shirt, D. B. (Ed.) *British red data books: 2. Insects*. Nature Conservancy Council) and Falk (1991. *A review of the scarce and threatened bees, wasps and ants of Great Britain*. Nature Conservancy Council), this characteristic insect has now spread widely. Else (1997. *Philanthus triangulum* (Fabricius, 1775). In Edwards, R. (Ed.) *Provisional atlas of the aculeate Hymenoptera of Britain and Ireland. Part 1*. Biological Records Centre) demonstrates this remarkable increase and even relates a record from central London at Battersea Bridge roundabout. The wasp's appearance on the other side of the Thames just goes to confirm that when an insect starts to spread, it can find a foothold in even the unlikeliest of sites. In London, these unlikely sites are often scrappy bits of rough ground, usually derelict or disturbed. Here is another tick in the list of unusual species associated with ruderal plots, that enthusiastic euphemism for "wasteland".—RICHARD A. JONES, 135 Friern Road, East Dulwich, London SE22 0AZ. (bugmanjones@hotmail.com).